



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steve Beshear, Governor

Leonard K. Peters, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Davies
(502) 564-7192

KSBA, KAM Receive Energy Leadership Awards *Awards presented at Governor's Conference on Energy and the Environment*

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Sept. 10, 2015) – Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Len Peters today presented Energy Leadership Awards to Ron Willhite and the Kentucky School Boards Association, and Greg Higdon and the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers during the 39th Governor's Conference on Energy and the Environment.

The awards recognize leaders from public and private sectors who have made outstanding contributions in Kentucky's energy field by promoting and utilizing energy efficiency and alternative energy resources as a way to achieve sustainability goals.

"On behalf of Gov. Steve Beshear and the entire Energy and Environment Cabinet, I would like to congratulate you for your marked distinction as leaders and for your contributions to Kentucky's energy future," said EEC Secretary Len Peters. "The awards presented here today honor you for understanding the challenges faced by Kentucky's changing energy landscape, especially in our manufacturing and education sectors, and for dedicating yourselves to innovation and sustainability. I hope that the generations of today and tomorrow will be inspired by your examples."

Ron Willhite has a long history of leadership in education and the energy industry. As the director of the Kentucky School Boards Association's School Energy Management Project (KSBA-SEMP), Willhite has worked tirelessly to reduce energy costs in public schools through efficiency. Now in its fifth year, the KSBA-SEMP program educates and supports school districts' energy management efforts.

The program provides energy management and technical support to all of Kentucky's 173 public school districts, and has placed 35 energy managers – the 'boots on the ground' – to provide services in 85 districts. With his visionary leadership and commitment to energy and the

environment, schools participating in the SEMP program have saved more than \$50 million in cumulative avoided costs—redirecting savings back to the classroom.

Today, Kentucky schools are among the most energy efficient in the nation, ranking second in percentage of ENERGY STAR school buildings – in large part due to his efforts.

The KSBA-SEMP program was developed five years ago in partnership with the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet as part of a comprehensive energy and education effort. Since its inception, KSBA has secured additional funding sources to provide partial support to school energy managers. KSBA has twice been awarded the distinguished ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the successful energy management program.

The Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has been working as an advocate for Kentucky's manufacturing community for over 100 years. Distributing newsletters, conducting executive briefings, and providing information to members throughout the Commonwealth, KAM ensures that manufacturers in all parts of the state are informed about impactful issues including timely energy-related topics.

As president and chief executive officer of KAM Greg Higdon understands that managing energy costs is critical to staying competitive in a national and global market. For over 20 years, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that manufacturers in all parts of the state are represented on a range of issues. Very early on he was keen to identify the role and impact that energy issues were going to have on the manufacturing community of Kentucky. To that end, he began to beat the drum about energy policies, technologies, to the nuts and bolts of how facilities can save energy and money – all with an eye towards preserving Kentucky manufacturing jobs.

Under Higdon's leadership, KAM has recently partnered with the Energy and Environment Cabinet, the Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center and the North Carolina Combined Heat and Power Technical Assistance Partnership to promote combined heat and power in the state as a strategy for businesses to stay competitive; and to pursue policies that help manufacturers take advantage of this technology.

"The leadership of individuals like Ron and Greg and the collaboration among public and private partnerships create a mutual incentive to successfully meet the energy challenges in Kentucky and the nation," said Secretary Peters.

For more information about the Energy Leadership Award program, contact John Davies, Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet at john.davies@ky.gov.

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